1: Jenness--163 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 736, 768, 587

"It is the widows who have the hardest lot. Their kinsmen are bound to support them and provide them with a home, but naturally a man with a wife and children of his own to take care of has no desire to be burdened with a widowed sister any longer than he can help. Friction, too, may arise at any time between sister and wife. Sometimes the widow becomes a public harlot; she will offer herself, that is, to any man who wants her for a day or a week, in the hope that some one will finally keep her permanently; should she give birth to a child no one will ever reproach her. Young widows never have any difficulty in finding new husbands, but the middle-aged often have to wait a long time, if they re-marry at all. The people have a proverb about them which runs: 'She had no property. She was an old woman when she finally remarried, an aged woman'."

2: Stefansson--296-297 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
736, 117

"Care of Infirm. One man of about forty-five, Avranna, is totally blind [297] and has been 'for a long time.' He seems tenderly cared for and goes walking about outside with his cane, guided by the shouts of grown people or children warning him of obstacles and telling him where to go."

11: Stefansson--271-273 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 736, 753

"We did not have to go over eight miles till we came to a camp of five houses, pitched on the ice about ten or twenty yards from shore, at the northeast corner of Simpson Bay. We were engaged with the help of some of the local men in pitching our tent about two hundred yards from the village when we noticed a man, evidently stone blind, come walking towards us, feeling about with a long cane as a blind man does. Two or three children stood watching him and kept warning him of the tide cracks, which were numerous here in the ice as they are everywhere near shore. The children kept shouting to him: 'Turn to the right! Turn to the left! Again to the left! Now watch out for a tide crack!' These cracks are dangerous to a man [272] who walks carelessly, for they are often covered with snow so as to be invisible and are wide enough for a man's foot to slip in, with considerable danger not only of a bad fall but of breaking a bone. With skill acquired through long blindness he avoided the tide cracks dexterously and walked straight up to where the children's voices told him that I was standing beside our sled, unloading it.

When he got hear he told me that he knew already who I was, and that very likely I knew who he was, for he was a man so much more unfortunate than other men that the story of his misfortune had traveled to distant places. No doubt I had heard the story, he said, but nevertheless he would tell it to me himself so that I might know it from his own lips and take warning from it and tell my friends to do the same.

Many years ago his house had been standing by itself some distance from the village, but from where he stood beside the seal-hole watching for the seal to come up he could see several other hunters out sealing. The seal, when it came, proved to be a bearded one, but being a strong man he had been able to hold it and to kill it. Without assistance he had with his ice pick enlarged the breathing-hole enough to pull the animal out. (It was no mean feat, seeing that a bearded seal will weigh from six hundred to eight hundred pounds.) Up to this time he had not thought of the other hunters, but now he looked around and saw that they were all far away, and while distinctly visible he felt sure that none of them had any idea what kind of a seal he had caught. (The hunter's law does not require that the hunters within sight be summoned to share at the cutting up of a common small seal.) When a bearded seal is killed all the hunters within view must be called in to share the prize.

It had occurred to him that by keeping the thing secret (by pretending this was a common seal), he might keep the animal to himself, and especially the skin, for he knew that he could sell pieces of it to a neighboring tribe who seldom catch bearded seals, for numerous articles of value. Accordingly he secretly cut the animal up, gave out the story that he had killed only a small seal, and pledged his wife to secrecy; but the story leaked out as such stories will. People came to him and took away from him both the skin and the [273] meat and reproached him bitterly. He now repented his act

and felt crushed by the disapproval of his people, but his punishment was to be made even heavier, for within a year he began to lose his eyesight and in another year he was stone blind. Since then he, poor miserable man, had been blind and a charge upon the community. Thus it was sure to go with those who did wicked things; and while he felt sure that I was a good man, nevertheless to know his story would do me no harm, and he wished I would pass it on to others, warning them to avoid selfish ways."

11: Stefansson--295 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 736, 754

"The blind man, Avranna, in Clouston Bay (there is also a blind man at Prince Albert village--old man--about 60) told us the reason of his blindness was that he had killed a large ugrug and when the people came wanting to cut it up he grudged to let them help themselves, therefore he became blind. I could not make out if the grudging of itself caused the blindness, or if some 'doctor' [shaman] was angered by it and made him blind--I believe the former. Natkusiak says it is no doubt true, for he knows of parallel cases in his own country. Usually there, however, it was this way: some one committed a bad deed (grudged to give something, stole, etc.) in secret. The 'doctor' would then so ordain 'magically' that the guilty person would in some way suffer--then not only was the guilt punished but also people found out who was guilty (e.g. if an article had been stolen)."